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Give Light And The People Will Find Their Own Way

THURSDAY, JULY 8, 1982

Gay group claims snub by 2 schools

By SHARON ABERCROMBIE

The local leader of a national church group representing homosexuals claims two church-supported schools refused the group meeting space for a convention next week.

The United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, a task force of the United Church of Christ, is holding its national meeting in Columbus July 15-17 at United Christian Center, 66 E. 15th Ave.

But the coalition originally wanted to meet at either Capital University or Ohio Dominican College because of convenient dormitory and meal facilities.

The group was advised to try elsewhere because of its gay orientation, Bob Roehm, local organizer of the conference, charges.

"It's ironic," Roehm said yesterday. "We are attempting to discuss how the church can be more hospitable to gay people, but we are being denied the simple hospitality of a meeting place to even raise the issue."

Officials of ODC and Capital view the matter somewhat differently, however.

Mary Ann Deer of ODC's department of student services was originally contacted by the group in early spring. New on the the job at the time, she said she referred the group to Dr. Richard Waite, vice president of student services.

Ms. Deer said she would have allowed the group to meet at ODC if the decision were up to her.

Neither Waite nor Sister Mary Andrew Metesich, college president, could be reached to comment yesterday.

Mary Prahl, director of program services at Capital, denied Roehm's charges, calling them "grossly unfair. I'm in empathy to their cause, but at the same time I felt their meeting here might not be appropriate."

Ms. Prahl said she had a frank

discussion with the Roehm and advised him to try elsewhere.

"There are other factors involved," she said. "You have to think of your constituency. Many times, people will associate controversial groups with an institution."

But Ms. Prahl said she left the door open to the coalition.

"I told them to call me back if they didn't have any luck, and I would take their request to my supervisors."

She said the coalition never called back.

Dr. Waller Wiser, Capital's provost, said he couldn't comment on Roehm's charges "because I don't know what we would have done in this case, since it never came up."

Wiser said the university has two policies regarding the use of its facilities. The university frequently books controversial speakers, in the interest of academic freedom.

But where outside groups are concerned, Capital officials take a more cautious approach, he said.

"The issue is what will happen. If we know a group would cause violence to people or property, we would not allow them on campus."

Wider said the university refused space to the Ku Klux Klan last year. "Obviously, this (the gay coalition) is a different case. But I still can't say what we would have done."

Meanwhile, the meeting that has had such a difficult time finding a location will have as its theme, "Turning Curses into Blessings: The Gifts of Lesbians and Gay Men to the Church."

Its main speakers will be the Rev. Susan Savell, consultant for the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries in New York City and author of "Racism and Sexism," and the Rev. William Reagan Johnson, author of "Loving Women, Loving Men; Gay Liberation and the Church."

news



of the Columbus Gay and Lesbian Community

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THE UNITED CHURCH COALITION FOR LESBIAN/GAY CONCERNS

by Rick Moore

The finished copy of this story was lost before it could be delivered to the NEWS for publication in the November (1981) issue. Rick Moore, author of the article, died Nov. 15 before it was discovered that the story was missing. Bob Roehm, going through Rick's papers and notes following his death, located Rick's notes for this article and re-typed it for publication in this issue. The following is the original text of Rick's article:

The United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, the Gay/Lesbian caucus within the United Church of Christ, plans to hold a national conference in Columbus July 15-17, 1982. The conference will bring together clergy and lay UCC persons throughout the country for organizing, networking, and mutual support.

The planning committee is having difficulty locating a facility to hold the conference. A campus location is preferred where participants could be housed in dorms, having meals and meetings in a central location. OSU has declined because the coalition is not a campus sponsored group. Capital University and Ohio Dominican College have both rejected UCCLGC this far because it is a Gay organization.

In one case, the coalition was told that the institution feared losing money from contributors; while in the other case, the coalition was told that other people on campus at that time might be "offended" by the presence of Gay people.

"It is ironic," said planning committee member Bob Roehm, "that we are attempting to discuss how the church can be more hospitable to Gay people but we are being denied the simple hospitality of a meeting place to even raise the issue."

One student at Capital was appalled by CU's rejection of UCCLGC. Following a Gay Alliance speaking engagement there she said, "I can't believe they turned you down. They require us to attend religion classes that stress tolerance and understanding and then they turn around and do this."

Possible locations for the conference in Columbus are still being sought. If no facility is available here, the conference may be moved to Cleveland, Dayton, or other Ohio cities. Persons interested in UCCLGC should contact Jan Griesinger, 18 N. College St., Athens, OH 45701, or call Rick at 488-2096 in Columbus.

THE SEQUEL TO RICK'S STORY

by Bob Roehm

A location has now been found for the United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns National Gathering, July 15-17, 1982. The event will be held at the United Christian Center, 66 E. 15th Ave., on the O.S.U. campus.

Planning committee member, Rick Moore, author of the previous article, died four days before a scheduled Nov. 19 meeting with United Christian Center staff to discuss the possibility of holding the event at the center. The Nov. 19 meeting continued as planned, and space has now been reserved at the center for the 1982 event.

Sleeping-bag and dormitory accommodations will be available at the center, enabling the building of a sense of community among registrants. Others may wish to stay at community homes or at local hotels. Except for simple breakfasts and a

catered evening meal, most meals will be eaten away from the building. In this way, registration cost for the event will be held to a minimum.

The Thursday and Friday evening lectures will be open to the public, and the planning committee hopes that Columbus community residents will be able at that time to dialogue with conference participants.

Persons interested in helping plan this national event are encouraged to contact Rev. Jan Griesinger at 18 N. College .. Athens, OH 45701 or to call Bob at 488-2096 in Columbus.

OCEAN SONG

*Ocean, I am here with you, come and fill me.
Wave to me as I stand atop my dune.
Ocean, you release me, set my spirit free,
You make me cry out in a cosmic tune.*

*And I love the sensations of the oceanside,
I love the changing patterns of the sea,
For the spirit reflected in the ocean tide
Is the spirit of the changing God in me.*

*Your salt waters race to meet my thirsty feet,
Sand blown against my body by the wind.
Such a precious - life is oh, so sweet,
And I love you like I love my dearest friend.*

*Your waves reflect the sunlight - sparkling like gold,
On painted skies gulls gracefully careen.
The joy is almost more than my soul can hold,
Someday I'll understand what it means!*

*Ocean, you've touched me, I'll never be the same,
But life goes on, our roles are never done.
We can go our own ways, play the Greatest Game,
And all the while the sea and I are one!*

*And I love the sensations of the oceanside,
I love the changing patterns of the sea,
For the spirit reflected in the ocean tide
Is the spirit of the changing God in me.*

*Richard T. Moore/6741
Kann Cottage, Hatteras Island*